



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.
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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

December 12, 2008

To: Senator Eric D. Coleman, Co-Chair
Representative Art Feltman, Co-Chair
Members, Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning &
Development

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: City of Norwich Application on Continuing Legislative Committee
December 16, 2008 Agenda

As you know, the HBACT is a professional trade association with over one thousand three hundred (1,300+) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of Connecticut's citizens. Our members are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals providing services to this diverse industry. We also created and administer the CT Developers Council, a professional forum for the land development industry in the state, and have been deeply involved in land use, growth management and planning issues for many years.

We recently learned that the City of Norwich has made an application asking the Committee to reverse a decision it made on July 10, 2008, to change a specific parcel's designation on the Locational Guide Map.

This application, an attempt to change the parcel's present designation from Neighborhood Conservation (established on July 10, 2008) back to Rural Lands, is just the latest example of an ongoing problem with the State Plan of Conservation & Development amendment process, i.e., the lack of predictability for the development community and the involvement of state government in project-specific local land use decision-making. The process by which this application made its way to you just a short time after your initial decision starkly illustrates how this process is not about deliberative and responsible planning, but has become a way for the State government to control what should be the exclusive domain of local government. Alternatively, it is a way for local objectors to a specific development to defeat a project by getting the state plan's locational guide map changed and, thereby, directly affecting any state permits or funding that might be required to make a project feasible. This is not what sound and comprehensive planning should be about.

The application is highly objectionable for these reasons, and we strongly urge the Committee to deny it. Home builders and other developers in Connecticut need to be able to depend on what the plan says and not have to worry about it changing once a project has begun in reasonable reliance on the plan.

Thank you for considering our comments on this application.

Representing the Home Building, Remodeling and Land Development Industries In Connecticut
"Enhancing Our Member's Value to Their Customers and Our Industry's Value to Society"